

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of communicating activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the method comprising:

receiving at least one condition, at a first location, the at least one condition defining when an indication of media consumption activity is sent by the first location to at least a second location, via the communication network;

receiving a request for media consumption, from a user at the first location;

sending at least one indication of media consumption activity to the at least a second location, via the communication network, if the at least one condition is met; and

refraining from sending at least one indication of media consumption activity to the at least a second location, via the communication network, if the at least one condition is not met.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the first location and the at least a second location are associated with at least one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the communication network is the Internet.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.
7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - receiving an identifier identifying the at least a second location;
 - and
 - the identifier comprising at least one of a legal name, a given name, a screen name, a user identifier, a network identifier, an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one condition comprises at least one of a day, a date, a time, time period, a user identifier, a source of

media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one indication of media consumption activity comprises at least one of a title, a subject, a user identifier, a source of media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one condition is received from a location remote from the first location, via the communication network.

11. A method of communicating activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the method comprising:

receiving at least one condition used to determine when a user is notified, via the communication network, of the receipt at a first location of an indication of media consumption activity, at least a second location;

receiving, at the first location, at least one indication of media consumption activity, from at least the second location;

notifying the user, at the first location, of the receipt of the at least one indication of media consumption activity, if the at least one condition is met; and

refraining from notifying the user, at the first location, of the receipt of the at least one indication of media consumption activity, if the at least one condition is not met.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein each of the first location and the at least a second location are associated with at least one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the communication network is the Internet.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

17. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

receiving an identifier identifying the at least a second location;

and

the identifier comprising at least one of a legal name, a given name, a screen name, a user identifier, a network identifier, an Internet

protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein the at least one condition comprises at least one of a day, a date, a time, time period, a user identifier, a source of media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.

19. The method of claim 11 wherein the at least one indication of media consumption activity comprises at least one of a title, a subject, a user identifier, a source of media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.

20. The method of claim 11 wherein the notifying comprises at least one of displaying an image, generating sound, and illuminating a light emitting diode representing the receipt of the at least one activity indication.

21. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

initiating, from the first location, an exchange of media between the first location and the at least a second location, if the at least one condition is met; and

refraining from initiating, from the first location, an exchange of media between the first location and the at least a second location, if the at least one condition is not met.

22. A system supporting the communication of activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the system comprising:

- a television display, at a first location, to support the consumption of media by a user;

- a storage, at the first location, communicatively coupled to the television display, and having an associated first network address;

- set top box circuitry, at the first location, the set top box circuitry communicatively coupling the television display to the communication network;

- at least one user defined identifier identifying at least a second location;

- at least one user defined condition for notifying a user; and

- software that receives at least one indication of media consumption activity from the at least a second location, via the communication network, and that responds by notifying the user if the at least one user defined condition is met, and that refrains from notifying the user if the at least one user defined condition is not met.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.

24. The system of claim 22 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

25. The system of claim 22 wherein the associated first and second network addresses are one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

26. The system of claim 22 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

27. The system of claim 22 wherein the at least one user defined identifier comprises at least one of legal name, a given name, a screen name, a user identifier, a network identifier, an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number.

28. The system of claim 22 wherein the at least one user defined condition comprises a day, a date, a time, time period, a user identifier, a source of media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.

29. The system of claim 22 wherein the at least one indication of media consumption activity comprises at least one of a title, a subject, a user identifier, a source of media being accessed, a media channel type, a mode, a media format, a genre, a language, a subject, and an artist.